GRAND LODGE OF PENNSYLVANIA.

FREE AND ACCEPTED MASONS.

In Memoriam

M. W. WILLIAM MERCER WILSON,

Grand Master,

AND OF

R. W. THOMAS BIRD HARRIS,

Grand Secretary,

OF THE

MOST WORSHIPFUL GRAND LODGE OF CANADA.

QUARTERLY COMMUNICATION HELD AT THE MASONIC TEMPLE,
PHILADELPHIA, JUNE 3, A. D. 1875, A. L. 5875.

Grand Lodge of Pennsylvania.

At the Quarterly Communication of the Grand Lodge of Pennsylvania, held on Wednesday, June 3d, A. D. 1875, A. L. 5875, the following minute was proposed by Past Grand Master Samuel C. Perkins, Representative of the Most Worshipful Grand Lodge of Canada, and with the Resolutions thereto attached, was unanimously approved and adopted by the Grand Lodge.

Right Worshipful Grand Master, and

Brethren of Grand Lodge:

Our sympathies and our mourning with the bereaved ought not to be limited to those within the circle of our own immediate Masonic relationship. Let us therefore now as a mark of respect to a Sister Jurisdiction, whose Oriental Chair is made vacant by death, feelingly and sincerely tender the sprig of evergeen to lay upon the grave, and lament with them the loss of him who has been taken from them by death, in the very midst of the duties of his high office.

As the Representative near this Grand Lodge of the Most Worshipful Grand Lodge of Canada, it is my sad duty to announce the death of WILLIAM MERCER WILSON, Most Worshipful Grand Master of that Grand Lodge, at Simcoe, Canada, on the 16th of January, 1875, in the sixty-second year of his age. And the Grand Lodge of Canada has cause to mourn his loss; and it is the privilege, no less than the mournful duty of the Grand Lodge of Pennsylvania to send the wave of fraternal condolence, vibrating through the space which separates us, and to mingle our laments with those of our brethren across the great lakes.

Grand Master WILSON was one of a class from which so many who have proved themselves efficient and practical workmen have been selected by the Craft, in various jurisdictions, to hold the gavel of power, and administer the government of the Fraternity. Men with a certain versatility of talent and ability, with sincerity of purpose, of unflinching courage, of undoubted integrity; well-balanced men in their judgments and attainments—firm, intelligent, with a strong faith in the capabilities of humanity and its strivings after a higher and more elevated standard of motive and action; and yet without any arrogance in the assertion of an independence of human action from the guidance of, and dependence upon, a Supreme and Divine Being, the Great Architect and Ruler of the Universe.

He enjoyed the respect and esteem of his fellow-citizens, to whose service and interests he ever was ready to lend whatever of influence and ability he possessed. At the time of his death he was Judge of the County of Norfolk, having previously filled several positions of trust and honor. Faithful, earnest, sincere, straightforward in all that he undertook, as a man and a Mason, he died beloved, respected and deeply lamented.

He was initiated June 11th, 1840, in St. John's Lodge, Simcoe, and the same year elected Junior Warden. In 1842 he was elected Worshipful Master of the Lodge, and filled the Oriental Chair, at intervals, for ten years. He was exalted in Hiram Chapter, Hamilton, and on the organization of the Grand Chapter in 1857, was elected First Principal, an office corresponding to that of Grand High Priest in Royal Arch Masonry as practiced in Pennsylvania. He took the degrees of Knighthood, and was a zealous and prominent Templar.

He was elected the first Grand Master of the Grand Lodge of Canada, and occupied that station for several years till 1850, when he was permitted to retire. In 1866 he was again elected, and served for two years, when his acceptance of office under the government led to his declining a re-election. But in 1871 he was again called by his brethren to assume the duties of the Oriental Chair in Grand Lodge, and continued in office

by successive re-elections till his death in January of the present year. He was indefatigable in his labors, wise and judicious in his counsels, firm in his administration, and jealous in maintaining the dignity of his office, and the honor of his Grand Lodge, and in the upholding of the principles of the Fraternity.

He was buried at Simcoe, January 20th, 1875, with the attendance of a very large number of his brethren, and with every mark of respect to his memory from his fellow-citizens. The impressive ceremonies of the Craft were fully carried out at his grave, after the usual religious services of the Church of England, of which he died a member.

Not very long after the Annual Communication of the Most Worshipful Grand Lodge of Canada, in July last, death removed the Right Worshipful Grand Secretary, Brother Thomas Bird Harris, who had, for a long series of years, so faithfully and ably discharged the laborious duties of that responsible office. Surely it is with no mere semblance and form, but with heart-felt emotion and genuine feeling, that we mingle our regrets and lamentations with those of our Sister Jurisdiction thus doubly bereft.

I offer the following resolutions:—

Resolved, That the Right Worshipful Grand Lodge of Pennsylvania, and Masonic Jurisdiction thereunto belonging, fraternally tenders to the Most Worshipful Grand Lodge of Canada, our most heart-felt expressions of sympathy and sorrow in the double bereavement which has taken from them, during the past year, their Right Worshipful Grand Secretary, Brother Thomas Bird Harris, and their Most Worshipful Grand Master, Brother William Mercer Wilson.

Resolved, That this minute and Resolutions be printed, and copies thereof be sent to the Most Worshipful Grand Lodge of Canada, and to the other Grand Lodges with which Grand Lodge is in correspondence, and to each Subordinate Lodge under this jurisdiction.